

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCES AND
RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED IN AN ADOLESCENT'S
CHOICE TO DRINK ALCOHOL

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by
Kimary Darr
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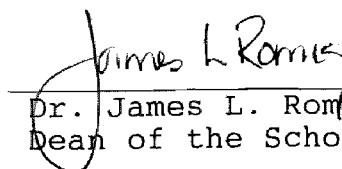
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A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCES AND
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An abstract of a Thesis by
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July 1991
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The problem. Alcohol use and abuse among adolescents is a serious and complex social problem.

Procedure. This paper studies the relationship between adolescent drinking and the influences exerted from peers, parents, and personality factors. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to 105 high school freshmen to examine these relationships.

Findings. Results suggested that the influence of peers was the strongest determinant in an adolescent's decision to drink alcohol.

Recommendations. Further research needs to be done with a more diverse group of adolescents as the data was collected from a non-representative sample.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

There has been a radical expansion in the use of both legal and illegal drugs in our society and an almost incredible increase in drug use by young people. The National Senior Survey has tracked this growth since the mid-1970s. Between 1975 and 1980, the number of young people who used drugs increased and drug use began at increasingly earlier ages. During the time between 1980 and 1984 the use of drugs slightly declined, but that decline has come to a halt and the problem has not disappeared. Very large numbers of young people now use drugs, and many use drugs heavily (Oetting & Beauvais, 1986). Specifically, cocaine had been tried by 17% of students in 1985 compared to 10% in 1976 (Jones & Bell-Bolek, 1986).

Another study cites that 60% of high school seniors reported illicit drug use at some time in their lives (Tisak, 1989). Hulsizer, Quigley, and Rosen (1990) state that in 1986, 58% of high school seniors reported they had used drugs. Of these, 13% said they had used cocaine in the past year. This is the highest amount of cocaine use ever reported. It is

more than twice the amount reported in 1975. Drugs are a serious problem, not only in high schools, but also in elementary and middle schools. For the most part, the initial experience with alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes took place before the ninth grade (Tisak, 1989). The percentage of students using drugs by the sixth grade has tripled since 1975. In the early 1960s, marijuana use was almost unheard of among 13 year olds. Now about one in six 13 year olds has used marijuana (Hulsizer et al., 1990). Further, recent studies have indicated that children are beginning to use alcohol earlier and are drinking more heavily at younger ages (Dielman, 1988).

Interest in this topic is high because of the problem that adolescent substance abuse continues to be in our society. The research shows a problem in regard to adolescent use of drugs and alcohol. However, there is distinct disagreement over what influences an adolescent toward substance use. During the past two decades, numerous studies have been initiated to investigate the influences that lead to adolescents' substance use and abuse (Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, & Cohen, 1986).

Most of the studies regarding adolescent alcohol use and misuse deal primarily with its incidence and prevalence (Mayer, 1988). The comparatively few which have examined the etiology conclude that one or more of the following variables play a causal role in adolescent drinking: parental influence (Halebsky, 1987; Johnson, 1986; Kline, 1987; Ried, 1989; Sheppard, 1987; Simons, 1989), peer influence (Johnson, Marcos, & Bahr, 1987; Kline, 1987; Oettig & Beauvais, 1987; Sheppard, 1989; Tisak, 1989), or personality traits (Brook et al., 1986; Mayer, 1988; Pisano & Rooney, 1988; Ried, 1989; Simons, 1989). As Jones and Bell-Bolek (1986) purport, it is vitally important to understand something about why an individual begins to experiment with drugs and alcohol and with whom such activities are likely to take place.

This study will take a look at some of the relationships regarding adolescent alcohol use. Previous research, upon which some assumptions were made for the present qualitative study, will be reviewed. The question to be asked is: What compels an adolescent to take that first drink? Past research suggests that personality factors, peer, and parental influences could all be equally important in the

adolescent's decision to engage in the first drinking experience. Therefore, the research question would be to discern what exerts the most influence upon adolescents to drink. The thrust of the study is to look for relationships upon which to base a quantitative research project.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to examine the literature and begin to come to an understanding of the factors that lead to adolescent usage of drugs and alcohol.

Procedures

Literature Search

A computer search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) data base was conducted. The first time this search was done, the broad term of peer groups was used which elicited 1,611 citations. After reviewing the first 250 entries and finding only 20 appropriate titles, a second search was begun. Key words in the second search included peer influence, conformity, informal leadership, peer acceptance, drug use, drug abuse, drinking, drug education, adolescents, secondary school students, and 1986-1990. This second attempt yielded 28 abstracts, 9 of which were repeats of the original 20. Therefore, 39 articles were found through the ERIC search.

Secondly, a hand search of the Social Sciences Index from 1986-1990 yielded 11 additional entries. In total, 50 abstracts for the period of 1986-1990 were located that were believed to relate to adolescent drug use and the factors involved.

Criteria for the Selection of Articles

When the review was begun, three criteria were set up to select the articles which would be analyzed.

They were as follows:

1. the articles must be primary research
2. the articles must discuss the factors that lead to adolescent drug and alcohol use
3. the articles must give adolescents' accounts of the hypothesized factors

After having read the 50 abstracts, another criteria was added. Because of the inherent problem in drug and alcohol abuse today, this reviewer felt it was necessary to concentrate on theories that are based on fact. Johnson et al. (1987) stated that, unfortunately, many studies of substance use are descriptive and atheoretical. Use is often simply noted, unguided by theoretical propositions and untied to the probable causes of adolescent drug use. In summary, many assumptions have been based on what

theorists or researchers think and not what could be shown empirically.

Therefore, the fourth criteria reads:

4. the studies must present empirical findings

Results

The following includes a report on the findings of the 50 abstracts located in this search. Because of time constraints, it was not possible to do an exhaustive search of all literature pertaining to the factors contributing to adolescent drug use. However, the reviewer believes it is a representative sample.

Types of Articles

Of the 50 abstracts located in the search, 15 were editorials on the factors of adolescent drug and alcohol use or on prevention programs. Eight of the articles were unavailable to the reviewer. Seven proved to be irrelevant. Twenty-one of the articles were those of primary research, which was the first of the selection requirements. Of these 21, 14 met numbers 1 and 2; 12 met the first three criteria; and 10 articles satisfied all four of the necessary criteria.

These ten articles will be the subject of this discussion.

Samples Studied

In six of the studies (Johnson, 1986; Johnson et al., 1987; Kline, 1987; Mayer, 1988; Oettig & Beauvais, 1986; Tisak, 1989), the samples were comprised solely of high school students. Two of the articles (Pisano & Rooney, 1988; Reid, 1989) reported subjects ranging from elementary to junior high age. One group (Simons, 1989) was made up of adolescents aged 13-17. Another group (Brook et al, 1986) included adolescents aged 13-18 and their mothers. Eight of the studies used school students. The remaining two (Brook et al., 1986; Simons, 1989) got their samples from the community. All research was conducted in urban or suburban environments.

Research Methodology

Design

All 10 of the studies in this review utilized the survey method to determine the contributing factors of adolescent substance use. Three of the 10 studies (Johnson, 1986; Johnson et al., 1987; Pisano & Rooney, 1987) used questionnaires exclusively. Two (Kline,

1987; Simons, 1989) combined the use of questionnaires and standardized scales. Four researchers (Mayer, 1988; Oettig & Beauvais, 1987; Ried, 1989) utilized standardized scales to determine the independent and dependent variables. One project (Tisak, 1989) relied solely on interview, while one study (Brook et al., 1986) combined the interview process with a questionnaire.

Threats to Validity

The internal validity of an experiment is the extent to which extraneous variables have been controlled by the researcher (Borg & Gall, 1989). If extraneous variables are not controlled in the experiment, we cannot know whether what is being observed in the experiment is due to the experimental or to an extraneous variable. Further, external validity is the extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to particular settings (Borg & Gall, 1989). A thorough analysis of the threats to the internal and external validity was conducted and the results are shown in Table 1.

The most serious threat to internal validity was that of instrumentation. This is a serious threat because of the fact that the instruments carry the

burden of 'proof' in each of these studies. Three of the researchers (Johnson, 1986; Simons, 1989; Tisak, 1989) reported no validity information. Four of these studies (Pisano & Rooney, 1988; Simons, 1989; Tisak, 1989) neglected to disclose reliability data. The reliability coefficients in two of these studies (Johnson, 1986; Mayer, 1988) were quite low.

Table 1

Threats to Validity

Threats*	Ma	R	S	Mo	I	T	H	P	E
Johnson	1	1	1	4	3	1	4	5	5
Ried	1	1	1	4	2	1	3	4	2
Simons	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	3	4
Pisano & Rooney	1	1	1	2	5	1	4	5	3
Tisak	1	1	1	3	6	1	4	6	4
Oettig & Beauvais	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	4	4
Kline	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	4
Brook et al.	1	1	1	6	4	1	4	4	5
Johnson et al.	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	5	4
Mayer	1	1	1	6	4	1	4	6	4

* Threats: Ma = maturation, R = regression, S = selection, Mo = mortality, I = instrumentation, T = testing, H = history, P = population, E = ecological. These subjective ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 6 with 6 representing the most serious threat.

A question arises when examining the threat of mortality. None of the studies reported 100% response rate, which was expected. However, four of the studies (Brook et al., 1986; Mayer, 1988; Oettig & Beauvais, 1987; Ried, 1989) had low return rates and one of the studies (Tisak, 1989) did not report the return rate information at all. As mentioned, the instruments are extremely important and the results of the study would surely be biased if some were not returned. Respondents who did complete will be different from those who did not. Further, each of the longitudinal studies suffered attrition which would have also skewed results.

A common threat was that of history. In all 10 studies, it was difficult to discern what was going on during the administration of the questionnaires. It was not clear as to what the students were told about the surveys. The response effect of the subjects was not taken into account in two of the studies (Brook et al., 1986; Tisak, 1989). Two of the studies (Mayer, 1988; Pisano & Rooney, 1988) had the instruments administered over a number of days. It was not known how much was discussed among subjects. Simply put, too

much is left to the imagination in regard to this extraneous variable.

Because of the nature of the studies, the remaining threats to internal validity of maturation, regression, selection, and testing were neither relevant to, nor characteristic of, these research reports.

The threats to external validity posed a much larger problem. In each of the 10 studies, population was a serious threat. The sample sizes were not small, but in most cases not adequately representative. All studies occurred in urban or suburban settings. Two of the studies (Johnson, 1986; Pisano & Rooney, 1988) used volunteers. Of the five researches that reported these demographics, the percentages of white subjects were 57 (Pisano & Rooney, 1988), 83 (Johnson, 1986), 85 (Johnson et al., 1987), 94 (Brook et al., 1986), 96 (Kline, 1987), and 98 (Mayer, 1988). Most studies used random sampling, but within a very limited accessible population. These factors do not lend to generalization.

Another concern is the ecological threat. All but two of these questionnaires (Brook et al., 1986; Simons, 1989) were conducted in a school setting, one

of which was private (Johnson et al., 1987). One study (Tisak, 1989) did not report the site. These results are not easily generalized to other environments.

Dependent Variable

In 5 of the 10 studies (Johnson, 1986; Kline, 1987; Mayer, 1988; Ried, 1989; Tisak, 1989), the dependent variable was adolescent alcohol use. Two of the articles (Pisano & Rooney, 1988; Simons, 1989) dealt with drug and alcohol usage. The remaining 3 studies (Brook et al., 1986; Johnson et al., 1987; Oetting & Beauvais, 1987) referred to drug use or the stage of the drug use of adolescents.

Independent Variables

In the 10 studies, the independent variables consisted of the factors that each researcher felt contribute to adolescent drug use. Four of these studies (Kline, 1987; Oetting & Beauvais, 1987; Ried, 1989; Simons, 1989) were gathering data to support theories. Seven of the studies (Johnson, 1986; Johnson et al., 1987; Kline, 1987; Pisano & Rooney, 1988; Ried, 1989; Simons, 1989; Tisak, 1989) looked at independent variables which included both family and peer influences. One study (Oetting & Beauvais, 1987)

examined only peer influences. Two studies (Brook et al., 1986; Mayer, 1988) took another facet of the adolescent and looked at personality traits that may lead a child to experiment with drugs and alcohol or even to become an abuser. Five of the studies (Johnson, 1986; Johnson et al., 1987; Kline, 1987; Ried, 1989; Simons, 1989) examined all three of these variables.

Research Outcome

In order to combine the findings of the 10 studies, a vote counting procedure was used. A visual representation of this appears in Table 2. When looking at the studies as a whole, the only pattern that emerges is that of the types or categories into which the factors fall: peer influence, parental influence, and personality traits. As was mentioned earlier, some of the studies looked at more than one category of factors, so the frequency total will not add to 10.

In looking at the combined data of the studies, one can see two things. First, most of the researchers report statistically significant results in the direction hypothesized. Secondly, the contributing factor categories of peer influence, parental

influence, and personality are all equally important when predicting adolescent substance use.

Table 2

Research Findings

Findings	Factors		
	Peer	Parent	Personality
Positive/significant	11	13	12
Negative/significant			
Positive/nonsignificant	1	1	2
Negative/nonsignificant	1	5	2

Conclusions

This review of literature provided a comprehensive look at the contributing factors of adolescent drug and alcohol use. It was shown that three major categories of the independent variable: peer influence, parental influence, and personality factors of the adolescent all contribute to the choices an adolescent makes in regard to alcohol and drug use.

One cannot take this at face value, however. There seem to be many factors that qualify this

conclusion. These factors, as well as future research needs, will be discussed.

First, the methods used to collect data are not without problems. Many of the studies use the self-report method. This is an important part of gathering information on the subject, however it cannot be used to the exclusion of all other methods. Especially in regard to reporting about drugs and alcohol, adolescents tend to overestimate usage of their peers. Junior high students overestimate to a greater extent than others (Sheppard, 1989). One cannot base substance use on what adolescents say about their friends.

Second, as was mentioned previously, these findings are not easily generalizable. The lack of racial minorities present in the studies lessens the importance of the findings. Similarly, there is an unequal representation of subjects coming from middle-class backgrounds. Further research needs to be done that includes children from the inner city and from rural areas; a wider range of socioeconomic status must also be incorporated.

Third, the studies utilized too large a range of ages to obtain data. It is true that some of the

studies were comparing different age levels. However, some of the articles reported subjects ranging from elementary to junior high students, or from ages 13-17 or 13-18. Combining data obtained from a seventh grader and that received from a senior in high school would certainly bias the results.

Finally, in some of the studies too many variables were examined at one time. Especially in the studies that used solely questionnaires or interviews, just a few items were relied upon to define the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Conclusions cannot be based on one or two items of a questionnaire.

There is one aspect of these research reports that should be seriously considered and that is the general trend the findings take. As mentioned previously, this trend is toward including all three of the factors (personality traits, peer influence, and parental influence) as the basis for which drug and alcohol decisions are made. This trend has important implications, especially in that it points to the need for further and more specific research in this area.

Chapter III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The data were collected in the spring of 1991 from a moderately sized private senior high school in the midwestern United States. The students come to this school from each section of the metropolitan community (population approximately 300,000) and surrounding suburban and rural areas. The school population consists of 93.5% white students, 4.1% Hispanic, 1.28% Asian, 1% black, and .091% students of Indian descent. The socioeconomic status of the students ranges from lower middle class to the upper classes.

Dependent Variable

A self-report questionnaire (see Appendix A) was administered to a randomly selected group of ninth grade students. A questionnaire was utilized because, according to Sudman and Bradburn (1974), the best and most widely used method for reducing response effects for threatening questions is the use of self-administered questionnaires which, in some cases, ensure anonymity and which remove the threat of direct disclosure to another person of what may be considered socially unacceptable behavior.

The subjects completed the questionnaire during the homeroom period. Through the use of a cover letter (see Appendix B), the students were informed that the questionnaires would be anonymous and confidentiality was stressed. The homeroom teachers had been briefed beforehand to distribute the questionnaires to the students, inform them that there was to be no discussion during the completion of the questionnaires, collect them at the end of the period, and return them to the designated drop-off point. The homeroom period was not used for the transmittal of announcements that day so that it would be totally quiet for the participants.

The questionnaire was adapted from the Adolescent Alcohol Involvement Scale as reported in Mayer (1988). The questionnaire contains 25 questions. However, those that had experimented with alcohol were instructed to answer different questions than those adolescents who had not. The first section, answered by all the respondents, gathers demographic data such as age, sex, number of children in the family, and placement in the family. The next section outlines the family structure including with whom the student lives, and perception of the parents' leniency. The third

section looks at the subjects' perceptions of self and attitudes toward school. The last section of questions answered by all respondents requests information on friends' substance use and that of the subject, which was the focus of the study. The rest of the survey is comprised of open-ended questions. The students that have tried alcohol described their first drinking experience as well as present drinking habits. The students who have abstained from alcoholic beverages discussed their methods for refusing alcohol and reasons for choosing not to drink.

Sampling Procedure

A systematic sampling procedure was used. As it was stated previously, the students completed the questionnaire in the homeroom period. In order to allow this procedure to run as smoothly as possible, five homeroom groups were selected instead of randomly selecting a few students from each homeroom.

Of the 120 students selected, 14 were absent and 1 student did not complete the questionnaire. Therefore, a sample of 105 of the 120 remained, an 88% response rate.

Sample Studied

The sample consisted of 54% males and 46% females, with ages ranging from 14 to 16. There was a mean of 3.276 children in the family. Of the students in the sample, 40% were the oldest in their families, 32% in the middle, 25% were the youngest, and 3% were the only child. Seventy-eight percent of the sample live with both parents, 14% live with mother only, 4% with only father, and 4% live with step-parents.

Exclusively ninth graders were surveyed primarily because ninth grade has been recognized as a crucial year of transition (Laderman, 1991). Secondly, grouping subjects of different age levels could potentially bias the results. The experience and attitude of high school freshmen differ significantly from that of juniors and seniors (Mayer, 1988). It would confound the results to try and combine their responses. As Mayer (1988) further states, studies should investigate a large enough sample of teenagers in a more narrowly defined age range.

Pilot Test

The questions in this survey were reviewed and revised by experts in the field of counseling. Penny Bisignano and Bonnie Giesking are guidance and

counseling consultants at the Area Education Agency and have both worked extensively with children and adolescents, especially those that are at risk. Further, the questionnaires were pretested by a group of 13-14 year olds in a different school system. As a result of this pretest procedure, one question was deemed irrelevant to the research question and was deleted. One question that seemed to be misunderstood by the respondents was revised.

Chapter IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Of the 105 high school freshmen surveyed, 77% (44/57) of the males and 79% (38/48) of the females reported having had tried an alcoholic beverage, or 78% of the total population. Of the total group, 57% had smoked cigarettes and 6% of the sample reported using drugs. This study will be focusing solely on the relationships surrounding alcohol use.

Specifically, 40% (19/48) of the females and 40% (23/57) of the males are considered by the researcher to be regular drinkers, which means they did not simply experiment with alcohol (as 40% of the girls and 37% of the boys did), but are those who drink on a regular basis, ranging from every few months to every weekend, to "as much as possible." Twenty-two percent of the sample have never had an alcoholic beverage.

Use of alcohol was analyzed on many levels. Utilizing the chi-square method of the two-by-two contingency table, it was found that the choice between drinking and not drinking is independent of the age of the adolescent, the gender, the attitude toward school, the family structure, the perception of the leniency of

the parents, and the perception of the kindergarten through eighth (K-8) experience in school. These results indicate that drinking is independent of many parental influences and personality factors.

When comparing the data, there is a significant deviation between the expected and the observed frequencies in regard to adolescents' perceptions of what prompted them to drink.

In regard to those that drink, the responses show that 57% of the students state the reason they took the first drink was because it was something they wanted to do or it was out of curiosity. Of the respondents, 21% said friends somehow pressured them into trying alcohol, 10% reported that their parents allowed them to experiment, and 12% said they did not know what prompted them to drink.

It seemed necessary to take a closer look at the 47 teens who said they drank because they wanted to. The question was raised: Who were these adolescents with when they took that first drink? A majority, 74.4% were with friends. In regard to regular drinkers, 68% of the females reported that they tried alcohol because they wanted to; of those, 85% were with friends. Of the males, 65% reported they tried

alcohol because they wanted to; 87% of those were with friends during that initial drinking experience. This shows a significant relationship between taking the first drink and being with friends. Further, there is a significant connection between an adolescent's drinking habits and real or perceived notions of their friends' drinking. Only 13% of non-users think their friends are regular drinkers; 20% of experimenters feel their friends drink regularly, 60% of all regular drinkers see their friends as regular drinkers as well. The students who drink on a regular basis perceive their friends to be regular drinkers significantly more often than those who do not drink regularly ($\chi^2 = 5.89$; $df = 1$; $p < .05$).

An even more revealing statistic relates to the regular drinkers' experiences at present. Ninety-eight percent (41/42) of these adolescents report that when they drink alcohol, it is with friends. Some of the respondents said they drink with friends and family. One student said he drank with his brother.

These findings indicate a relationship between adolescents' drinking and peer influences.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study was carried out on the assumption that friends would not exert any stronger influence on an adolescent's choice to drink than parental influences or personality factors.

Because this is a study primarily of a qualitative nature, it is looking for trends, or relationships. Few inferences of cause and effect can be made. However, the results suggest that there seems to be a significant relationship in regard to the peer involvement in adolescent decision-making about the use of alcohol.

The data show a relationship between adolescent drinking and peer involvement. Most children took the first drink in the company of peers; most regular drinkers do their drinking with peers. Most children who do not drink regularly do not see their friends as drinkers; those that report being regular drinkers perceive their friends as drinking regularly as well. All of the parenting and personality factors examined were proven independent of adolescent drinking. The choice to drink was seen as non-independent from peer

involvement. This data is substantiated by Johnson et al. (1987) who state that the single best predictor of the presence or amount of an adolescent's substance abuse is the extent to which the individual associates with other adolescents who engage in substance use.

In the review of the literature, many threats to the internal validity of the studies were noted. This study attempted to address each of those issues. Some of these attempts were successful; others were not. In regard to this study, the threats of maturation, regression, selection, mortality, testing, and history were all irrelevant. However, instrumentation provides some threat to the validity. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from a standardized scale, which provides content validity. Further, the questions were revised by experts and a pretest was run. Even with these safeguards, reliability data was not obtained. More extensive testing and retesting needs to be done.

External validity posed a much larger problem. As with many studies examined in the literature, the data were collected from a non-representative sample. Not only was there a lack of racial minorities, but also, because the study was conducted in a school setting,

the dropout population could not be included. Further research needs to be done with a more diverse group of adolescents.

Many general trends can be seen in the results of the study even with the problems of validity. As Johnson et al. (1987) states, whenever important findings derive from nonrepresentative samples, it is of course appropriate to call for replications in a variety of settings. The results indicate the reality of adolescent drinking. Further indications are that peer involvement is very important in the adolescents' choice to begin drinking as well as the choices made to continue drinking.

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APPENDIX A
Questionnaire

1. Your age _____
2. Circle one:
male female
3. Number of brothers _____ sisters _____
4. Circle one:
I am the youngest oldest in the middle
5. Check one:
My parents are strict _____ Lenient _____
Give an example:
6. Check one:
I live with both parents _____ dad _____
mom _____ dad/step mom _____
mom/step dad _____ other _____ (please
specify) _____
7. Number of close friends _____
8. Check one:
I like _____ dislike _____ school
What do you like about it?
What do you dislike about it?

9. Would you say your K-8 school experience was:
successful _____
unsuccessful _____
in what ways?
10. Check if yes:
I think my friends: use drugs _____
smoke cigarettes _____
drink alcohol regularly _____
11. Have you ever used drugs? yes _____ no _____
Have you ever smoked cigarettes? yes _____ no _____
Have you ever had an alcoholic beverage?
yes _____ no _____
12. If you answered "no" to drinking alcohol, go to question #14. If you answered "yes" to drinking alcohol, think back to the first time you took a drink and answer the following questions:
a. what grade were you in?
b. who was with you?
c. where were you?
d. what prompted you to drink?
e. how did you feel about it?
13. If you have tried alcohol, please answer the following:
a. how often do you drink?
b. how do you obtain the alcohol?

- c. what are the reasons for continuing to drink alcohol?
 - d. how much alcohol do you drink at each sitting?
 - e. with whom do you drink?
 - f. what are the physical effects? be specific
 - g. have there been any consequences from your drinking? if so, please be specific (personal, family, legal, or at school?)
 - h. how do you feel about your drinking?
14. If you answered "no" to drinking alcohol, please answer the following:
- a. what are your reasons for choosing not to drink?
 - b. have you ever been offered alcohol? if so, what did you do to refuse it?

Thank you for your cooperation and honest participation.

Please place the survey in the envelope, seal it, and return it to your homeroom teacher.

APPENDIX B

Letter to Students

March 13, 1991

Dear Student,

Thank you for taking part in this research project being conducted at Drake University.

The purpose of this study is to look at the attitudes of 9th graders in relation to alcohol and drug use.

The results of this study will provide a preliminary understanding of these attitudes that will aid in future research.

The researcher is particularly interested in your responses because it is believed that 9th grade is a very important year in the development of attitudes regarding drugs and alcohol.

It is very important that you answer each item honestly and thoroughly. Each survey will be kept strictly confidential and completely anonymous. Only this researcher will be reading the individual answers and analyzing the results.

Please complete this form immediately, place it in the envelope provided, seal it, and return it to your homeroom teacher. He or she will then take the envelopes to the Counseling Center where they will be picked up by the researcher.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Kimary Darr

Drake University